

Message Text

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TAGS: BEXP, IT

SUBJ: SPECIALIZED TRADE MISSIONS - ADVANCE OFFICER ACTIVITIES

REF: A) STATE A-9156; B) STATE 140278

1. BASED ON OUR EXPERIENCE WITH THE HOSPITAL EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIERS TRADE MISSION, THE TIMING AND INCREASED LEVEL OF ADVANCE OFFICER ACTIVITY IS, ON BALANCE, AN IMPROVEMENT. (THIS JUDGMENT MAY BE DUE IN PART TO THE EXPERIENCED PROFESSIONAL WHO DID THE ADVANCED WORK FOR US.)

2. ADVANTAGES (MOST OF WHICH PERTAIN TO TIMING) ARE A) THE ADVANCE OFFICER IS IN A POSITION TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE MISSION MEMBERS' NEEDS THAN EARLIER ON, BECAUSE HE ARRIVES ONLY A FEW WEEKS BEFORE THE MISSION ITSELF AND MANY DETAILS ARE NOT AVAILABLE UNTIL THAT TIME; B) FOR THE SAME REASON, THE ADVANCE OFFICER IS ABLE TO ASSIST IN PUTTING TOGETHER A FIRM BUDGET WHICH THE POST CAN ADHERE TO; C) THE POST IS ABLE TO CONVEY LAST MINUTE INFORMATION TO THE MISSION THROUGH THE BRIEFING WHICH THE ADVANCE OFFICER GIVES AT THE FIRST MISSION STOP; D) THE CALLS MADE BY THE ADVANCE OFFICER HELP.

3. DISADVANTAGES AREA A) THE ADVANCE OFFICER ARRIVES WHEN PRE-MISSION ACTIVITY AT THE POST IS BUILDING TO A PEAK, IMPOSING ADDITIONAL WORKLOAD IN THE FORM OF ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT AND APPOINTMENTS AT A BUSY TIME; B) THE PRINT PACKAGE IS ALREADY UNCLASSIFIED

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DONE BY THE TIME OF HIS ARRIVAL, MAKING IMPOSSIBLE CORRECTIONS

ON THE BASIS OF ANY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION HE MAY BRING; C)
IN ROME APPOINTMENTS ARE VERY DIFFICULT TO COME BY EVEN IN THE
WEEK BEFORE THE MISSION FOR MISSION MEMBERS; APPOINTMENTS FOR
THE ADVANCE MAN THREE-FOUR WEEKS IN ADVANCE BECOME ALMOST
IMPOSSIBLE TO ARRANGE. CONSEQUENTLY FOR ROME THE USEFULNESS
OF THE ADVANCE OFFICER'S NEW ROLE IS DIMINISHED.

4. THE BASIC QUESTION OF WHETHER TO HAVE AN ADVANCE OFFICER OR
NOT REMAINS. A NUMBER OF FACTORS INFLUENCE HIS EFFECTIVENESS, SUCH
AS EXPERIENCE OF THE COMMERCIAL OFFICERS AT THE POST, MISSION
PRODUCT THEME AND TYPE OF INDUSTRY, NEEDS OF THE MISSION MEMBERS,
TYPE OF MARKET SITUATION, NATURE OF ECONOMIC SYSTEM, SOPHISTICA-
TION OF LOCAL BUSINESSMEN. FURTHERMORE, TO MAKE TELEPHONE OR
PERSONAL CALLS WITHOUT ASSISTANCE OF THE POST'S PERSONNEL,
THE ADVANCE MAN SHOULD BE FLUENT IN THE LOCAL LANGUAGE. IT IS
OUR IMPRESSION THAT ADVANCE OFFICERS ARE RELATIVELY LESS NECESSARY,
CETERIS PARIBUS, IN DEVELOPED MARKET ECONOMIES THAN ELSEWHERE.
WE SUGGEST THAT, AS A PART OF THE PLANNING PROCESS, POSTS
SCHEDULED TO HOST A TRADE MISSION BE ASKED IF THEY FEEL AN
ADVANCE OFFICER WOULD BE USEFUL. VOLPE

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